

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Reserve
aQL676
.5
.I57
1991



Invite birds
to your home

conservation
plantings for
the midwest



RUSSIAN-OLIVE *Elaeagnus angustifolia*

Bird use: 31 species

Ornamental values: Large shrub to small tree; introduced species widely established in dry alkaline sites in West; silvery-yellow to pink fruits persist nearly whole winter; narrow green leaves silvery below.

Adaptations: Well-drained to dry soil; sun.

In bloom: June-July

In fruit: September-February

Height: 15-25 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.



FIRETHORN

Pyracantha spp.

Bird use: 17 species

Ornamental values: Medium to large shrubs; white blooms; showy orange to red fruits.

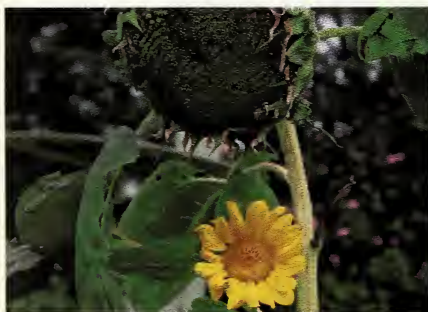
Adaptations: Moist to well-drained soil; sun to partial shade.

In bloom: June

In fruit: September-March

Height: 6-12 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries.



SUNFLOWER

Helianthus spp.

Bird use: 52 species

Ornamental values: Tall annual plant; has large yellow flowers.

Adaptations: Well-drained soil; sun.

In bloom: June-August

Ripe seed: August-September

Height: 4-8 ft.

Sources: Commercial seed stores.



CRABAPPLE

Malus spp.

Bird use: 29 species

Ornamental values: Small to medium-size trees; showy white to pink blooms; fruits are red, purple, orange, or yellow.

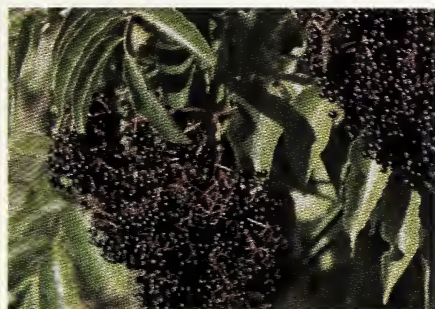
Adaptations: Well-drained soil; sun to light shade.

In bloom: April-May

In fruit: September-April

Height: 10–30 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, grafting, budding.



ELDERBERRY

Sambucus spp.

American elder illus.

Bird use: 50 species

Ornamental values: Tall shrubs; blooms in flat, whitish clusters; red to purple-black fruits.

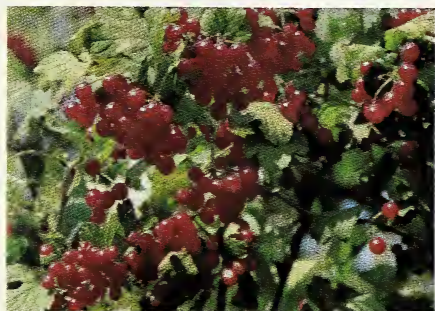
Adaptations: Moist to well-drained soil; sun to shade.

In bloom: May-July

In fruit: July-October

Height: 5–8 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries.



AMERICAN CRANBERRYBUSH (highbush cranberry)

Viburnum trilobum

Bird use: 28 species

Ornamental values: Upright, tall shrub; showy flat clusters of whitish flowers; glossy scarlet fruit clusters.

Adaptations: Deep, moist to well-drained soil; sun to light shade.

In bloom: May-June

In fruit: September-May

Height: 8–12 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, some state nurseries, wilding transplants, cuttings.

CHERRY

Prunus spp.

Bird use: 49 species

Ornamental values: Variable forms: shrubs, small to large trees; small fine-toothed leaves, yellow in fall; showy white flower clusters or drooping spikes; small bright-red to black fruits.

Height: shrub, 5–15 ft.; tree, 20–75 ft.

Adaptations: Moist to dry soil; sun to light shade.

In bloom: April–June

In fruit: Variable with species, June–November.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.

WILD PLUM

Prunus americana

Bird use: 16 species

Ornamental values: Large shrub to small tree; suited to large yards or fields; spreads by suckers to form clumps; fragrant pink and white flowers; hardy red or yellow fruits.

Adaptations: Moist to well-drained loamy soil; sun.

In bloom: April–May

In fruit: July–October

Height: 10–30 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.



FAMILIAR
BIRDS and their
preferred foods

COTONEASTER

Cotoneaster spp.

Bird use: 6 species

Ornamental values: Generally medium-size shrubs; usually planted as a hedge but also as ground cover; dark-green leaves turning red-gold in fall; small pink or white flowers; showy red, orange, or black fruits.

Adaptations: Moist to well-drained soil; sun.

In bloom: May-June

In fruit: September-November

Height: 2-10 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries.

TATARIAN HONEYSUCKLE

Lonicera tatarica

Bird use: 18 species

Ornamental values: Large shrub; pink to yellow-white blooms; yellow to red fruits.

Adaptations: Well-drained to dry soil; sunlight to light shade.

In bloom: May-June

In fruit: July-September

Height: 5-15 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries.



BLUE JAY

acorns, cherry,
sunflower, wild plum,
cultivated grains



BALTIMORE ORIOLE

apple, cherry, elderberry,
mountain-ash, various berries



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

mulberry, sunflowers,
seeds of garden flowers,
weeds, and conifers

REDCEDAR

Juniperus virginiana

Bird use: 25 species

Ornamental values: Medium-size coniferous tree (many varieties); dense, green to blue-green needles; small dusty-blue, berrylike cones.

Adaptations: Moist to dry soil; sun to light shade.

In bloom: April-May

In fruit: September-May

Height: 15–40 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, some state nurseries, wilding transplants.

BITTERSWEET

Celastrus scandens

Bird use: 12 species

Ornamental values: Twining vine; pale-green flowers; bright-red berries in yellow or orange husks.

Adaptations: Well-drained to dry soil; light shade.

In bloom: May-June

In fruit: September-December

Height: climbs to 25 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries, some state nurseries, cuttings.



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

nectar of columbine, delphinium,
petunia, trumpetcreeper



CARDINAL

autumn-olive, corn,
dogwood, sunflower,
various berries

MOCKINGBIRD

autumn-olive, elderberry,
firethorn, highbush
cranberry, holly



HOLLY

Ilex spp.

Bird use: 20 species

Ornamental values: Variable forms: upright rounded shrubs, small to medium-size trees; many varieties; dark-green foliage, evergreen or deciduous; small whitish blooms; bright-red, black, or yellow fruits (very persistent).

Adaptations: Moist to well-drained soil; sun to shade.

In bloom: April-June

In fruit: September-May

Height: shrub, 5–15 ft.;

Sources: Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants, cuttings.

tree, 30–50 ft.

HAWTHORN

Crataegus spp.

Bird use: 19 species

Ornamental values: Small trees; pale-green toothed leaves; abundant, clustered, white flowers; orange to red fruits (very persistent).

Adaptations: Deep, moist to dry soil; sun to shade.

In bloom: May-June

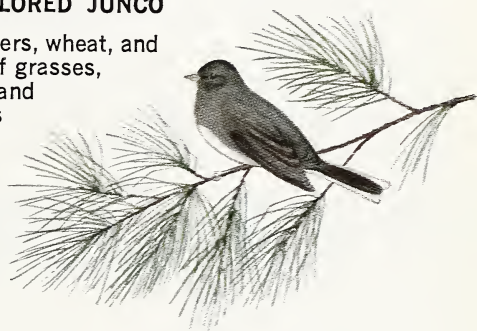
In fruit: October-March

Height: 15–30 ft.

Sources: Commercial nurseries.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO

sunflowers, wheat, and
seeds of grasses,
weeds, and
conifers



ROBIN

cherry, cotoneaster,
dogwood, Russian-olive,
various berries



EASTERN BLUEBIRD

dogwood, honeysuckle,
mountain-ash, redcedar,
various berries

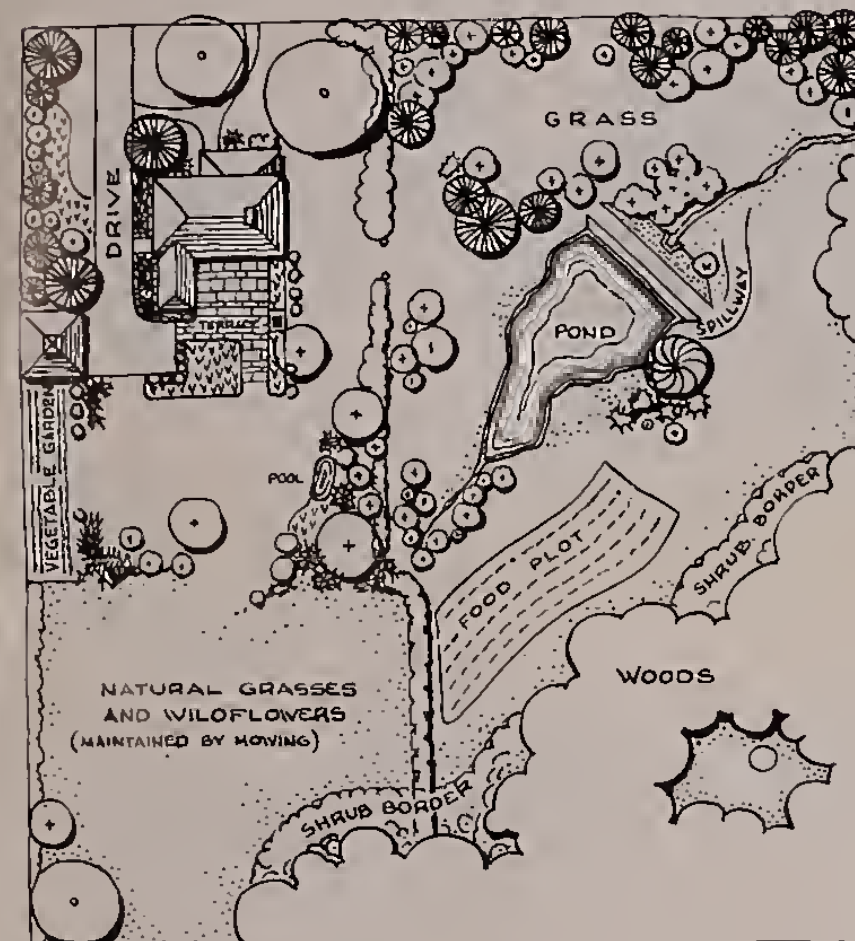


Create a Landscape Design

You have endless choices of combinations to consider in creating a conservation landscape design: hardwoods and conifers; vines, shrubs, and trees; grasses; flowers; even weeds. If your yard is small, you may be limited to single specimens of different plants. With much larger grounds, you can use hedges, clumps, food plots, and other massed plantings. If you have a wooded area, a small clearing within it can create more edges for birds and lend variety to the landscape.

The upper left part of this design suggests plantings and their arrangement for a moderately large suburban house and lot. The rest of the design shows features that could be added for a larger tract. Your choice in species and their arrangement and placing will depend on your space.

Be sure your landscaping allows you to see the birds. Put the plants where they can be seen from a window, patio, or terrace. For best results, choose the kinds of plants reported to have high bird use. Careful attention to periods of bloom and the availability of choice foods makes it possible to have a succession of floral displays and bird foods throughout the year.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | Pool or birdbath | | Trees for birds |
| | Flowerbed | | Shrub hedge |
| | Shade tree | | Weeping willow |
| | Large conifer | | Woodland clearing |
| | Low conifer | | Natural or planted hedgerow |
| | Ornamental or garden shrubs | | Conifer screen with planted shrub borders |
| | Shrubs for birds | | |

Choose Plants of Wildlife Value

By knowing the wildlife value of plants you now have, you can plan additional plantings that will bring a diversity of plant forms, food producers, and shelter plants that would otherwise be missing. Many common shade trees and landscape shrubs, for example, yield little food for birds. Autumn-olive, cherry, or good fruit-bearing shrubs are helpful additions. Yards and grounds that have only deciduous trees and shrubs can be improved by adding junipers, cedars, yews, and other evergreens that provide winter shelter for birds.

Plants in this brochure are adapted and useful in the Midwest from Michigan and Indiana west to the Dakotas and Kansas.

ways of attracting birds



Water Areas.—Most birds need open water of some kind. A small pool with stones in the shallow edges draws birds to drink and bathe. They use the dry tops of the rocks for preening sites after bathing. A pond may attract some water birds at all seasons but most often during spring and fall migrations. Landscape the pond area with conifers, clumps of shrubs, and hedges for resting, nesting, and feeding. Encourage some aquatic growth along part of the shoreline but control its spread.



Living Screens.—Hedges and rows of trees screen off unpleasant views and reduce noise from highways. In crowded neighborhoods they offer privacy for your backyard activities. And they attract birds to your place year after year. Conifers, autumn-olive, dogwood, cotoneaster, or a combination of these make good living screens.

Open Areas.—Meadowlarks, bobolinks, and several kinds of sparrows favor open stretches of lawn and fields with few if any trees or shrubs. In seldom-mowed open areas, try planting a variety of native grasses. They protect the soil, and birds and mammals like the variety of foods.

Winter Protection.—A windbreak of cedars, spruce, or pines with a crabapple tree tucked in on the sheltered side gives birds a warm, safe place to rest when the snow is deep. A food plot or feeder nearby helps keep the birds with you through the snowy months.

Living Fences.—Hedges or rows of honeysuckle, dogwood, or autumn-olive can replace a wire fence between fields, can divide up fields, and can protect the house area. Cardinals, brown thrashers, and mockingbirds find living fences ideal.



Food Plots.—"Seed eaters," such as goldfinches, cardinals, juncos, and sparrows, come to food plots of millets, grain sorghum, corn, or sunflowers; all are good bird foods to plant. Wild bristlegrasses and ragweeds also attract many birds. Plots can be small, perhaps several short rows, or large if you have the space.

The Basic Resources—Soil and Water

When planting for birds, you need to consider such things as soil, slope, drainage, exposure aspects, and climate as well as your personal wishes. Added benefits occur where plantings help provide shade, stabilize soil, and control potentially damaging water runoff.

In general, trees and shrubs that attract birds grow satisfactorily on well-drained, fairly fertile, somewhat loamy soils not particularly suited for vegetables and flowers. The ideal soil has a loose, loamy upper layer 18 inches or more deep. A neutral or slightly acid reaction is preferred.

When your house, street, sidewalk, and driveway were built, the normal pattern of water flow was changed and likely the runoff rate increased. Careful landscape planning can handle the extra water and check soil erosion. Plants described in this pamphlet that attract birds also help control soil erosion and water runoff.

Harmonize with Manmade Structures

Try to blend your plantings with your house, walkways, and rock walls into a total landscape design. Put the permanent trees and shrubs in places where their roots will not interfere with masonry structures. Use annual species to provide more kinds of bird feeds, to balance landscape spacing, and to fill in along manmade structures. Planting on the contour adds natural beauty in pleasing patterns and helps control soil erosion and water runoff.

Bird houses, baths, and feeders can supplement the plantings to make your yard even more inviting. Select the kinds that blend in with your landscaping; the more simple and natural they look, the better they are. Feeders with fruits and grains are food sources in late winter after fruits from your plantings have been depleted. Certain kinds of nesting houses and shelves attract certain kinds of birds. The houses to select depend on what species nest nearby. But equally important is how urbanized your area is—some birds like city life but others do not.

PA-982 Reviewed and approved for reprinting March 1991

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1991 O-291-261

FOR HELP

You can get further information on plants, soils, and conservation methods at your local soil and water conservation district office. The Soil Conservation Service, as part of its assistance to conservation districts helps people apply many conservation practices that increase wildlife. County agents, commercial nurserymen, landscape architects, and bird societies can also help.



These programs are available on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

PLANTS FOR BIRDS, BEAUTY, PROTECTION



AUTUMN-OLIVE *Elaeagnus umbellata*

Bird use: 15 species

Ornamental values: Large, spreading shrub with gray-green foliage; fragrant, small, yellowish blooms; abundant red fruits.

Adaptations: Moist to dry soil; sun to light shade; Cardinal variety, winter hardy.
In bloom: May-July *In fruit:* September-December *Height:* 8–15 ft.
Sources: Commercial nurseries, several state nurseries.



DOGWOOD

Cornus spp.
Silky dogwood illus.

Bird use: 47 species

Ornamental values: Variable forms: small to large shrubs, small trees; leaves strongly veined, red to bronze in fall; small blooms in showy, whitish to yellowish, flat clusters or bunched inside four creamy bracts; fruits bunched or clustered — red, blue, or white.

Adaptations: Moist to well-drained soil; sun to shade. *Height:* shrub, 5–8 ft.; tree, 20–30 ft.
In bloom: April-June *In fruit:* August-February
Sources: Commercial and state nurseries, wilding transplants, cuttings.



MOUNTAIN-ASH

Sorbus spp.

Bird use: 20 species

Ornamental values: Medium-size trees with compound leaves; flat, white flower clusters; bright red to orange berry clusters.

Adaptations: Moist to dry soil; sun; cool climate. *Height:* 20–40 ft.
In bloom: May-June *In fruit:* August-March
Sources: Commercial nurseries, wilding transplants.